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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1930.

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THE NATION

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LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

THE ABYSS

That Next War. By K. A. BRATT. (Allen & Unwin. 10s. 6d.)

THE campaign against war seems to have run into a kind of stale-mate. The weight of the argument is all on one side. Nothing sensible can be said, nor is said, in defence of war. But nevertheless people feel it to be inevitable, and the course of events seems to be bearing them out. We are rushing towards war with increasing acceleration, and nothing can stop us except ourselves. But "we," except for a small minority, are fatalists, sceptics, indifferentists. We don't know, don't think, don't care. We drift as though we were hypnotized, and it looks as if we should not wake till we are awakened by the noise of the bombs.

Meantime scattered voices cry into our closed ears, and one of the most poignant and importunate speaks in Major Bratt's book. Major Bratt is a Swede, but he is also a professional soldier, and should be treated with respect by those who dismiss with contempt the views of laymen. Whether that will help is another matter. For whatever soldiers and sailors and airmen may privately think it is their business to prepare war, and they will not be diverted from that task because they realize what the next war will be like. Probably, indeed, if Major Bratt were not a citizen of a small country he would not have written, though he may have thought, as he does.

His book, Mr. Wickham Steed tells us, "has been read, discussed, and quarrelled about from end to end of Sweden"; and we will hope, with him, that "the English version may stir up controversy, and, still better, promote thought throughout the English-speaking world." For the breaking of the fatalistic trance is the first condition of getting anything done.

The earlier part of the book is taken up with a forecast of what the next war will be like. Like most of the younger and more intelligent professionals he believes that the air-arm will be decisive, if a decision is to be reached at all. Intelligent laymen who study the subject commonly take the same view; and those who want to have an idea, expressed without rhetoric or exaggeration, of what war in the air will mean, may turn to the pages of the book. Or they may discover it a few years hence by actual experience, but then it will be a little late. Major Bratt has no mercy on comfortable illusions. He sees, what everyone must see who will look at the course of events, that the menace of the next war is not remote and visionary, but near and urgent:—

"For the moment there is a pause, but only a relative pause. Europe is still hovering on the brink of a decision. Exhaustion after the war, combined with forces of various kinds, which were set in motion in order to effect a change, have slowed down the tempo. But their influence is no greater than this. . . . Everywhere there is a feeling that the ground is rocking, as if by an earthquake. The path of this development must inevitably lead to war. The strong current of opinion in favour of peace which courses through the nations has not succeeded in stopping military development. The generation which deludes itself in an interval between wars that war is over should cease to do so."

Militarists agree with this forecast, but draw the inference that we must continue that competition in armaments which has shown itself to be a principal cause of war. Major Bratt takes the opposite view. The more the danger is imminent the bolder must remedial action be. But what action? That is hotly disputed among the opponents of war, and their lack of agreement increases their impotence. With the out-and-out pacifist, who urges immediate one-sided disarmament and repudiates force to check force, Major Bratt joins direct issue. An international society, he holds, could no more do without an armed force than a nation can do without a police; and there most people agree with him. But how is the force to be provided?

That is the "Problem of the Twentieth Century" discussed by Major Davies in a book recently reviewed in these columns. He assumes that States will insist on maintaining their national forces. That immediately raises the question, how can the international force be made strong enough to cope with the strongest national force? And if it be, will not the world be ruined by its very effort to avoid ruin? Major Davies develops the ingenious idea of reserving to the international force all the latest, and therefore most powerful, weapons, such as the air-force, poison gas, and tanks, and confining national forces to those that were available in 1914. For the discussion and defence of this scheme readers must be referred to his book. Major Bratt is more radical, and may therefore appear more chimerical. He conceives a world-federation, a world-executive, and a world-force, while national forces are to be reduced to a mere police. If that could be achieved a world-air-force would be sufficient to suppress rebellion against the world-authority. The bare mention of such schemes brings out the difficulty of our situation. If we are as bellicose as Major Davies believes, can we hope to avoid war by pooling our bellicosity? On the other hand, if we assume, with the uncompromising pacifists, that nothing can be done till we cease to be bellicose, what chance is there of anything ever being done? For millenniums preachers have been telling men, what is obviously true, that they are fools to wage war. This is the dilemma which those who really see and feel the issue have to face up to, and it accounts for the divisions that weaken them. From those divisions the common enemy, the war-men, profit, and that is why we are drifting again to the abyss.

In these circumstances, is there anything to be done, other than that long process of persuasion which does not seem likely to be swift enough to save us? Major Bratt has his answer to that question. He suggests that international capital and labour might combine to stop another war; and certainly, if they did combine, Governments would be powerless against them. This may seem a chimerical idea. So far as capital is concerned, Communists would laugh it to scorn; for in their view the machinations of capital are the only cause of war. But this is one of the myths of the Communist religion. Capital, as a whole, was not in favour of war even in 1914, and it has learned much since then by dire experience. The international trusts which are the main fact of recent economic development may have surprising reactions on international politics. For war would ruin the whole structure they are building up. Whether labour would co-operate with capital is another matter. On many questions capital and labour are, or think themselves, enemies. But are they enemies on this question too? Communist labour, of course, is the enemy of capitalism, and Communism is the greatest menace now in the world, not only of civil, but of international war. But the great mass of labour, in Europe and America, is not Communist, and might join with capital to stop war, if not for any other purpose. The Labour International did indeed fail dismally and disastrously in 1914. It may fail again. But, again, it may not. Major Bratt indeed is more doubtful about capital than about labour, and he suggests, if all else fails, a general strike against war. "The revolt of the masses against war is a revolt of crossed arms, millions of crossed arms. It is the wheel which ceases to revolve, the silent machine, the discipline of crossed arms *versus* the discipline of bayonets. . . . The Kapp incident in Germany proved what forces the crossed arms had at their disposal." Even more remarkable, one might suggest, was the *débâcle* of French action in the Ruhr, due to the resistance of German labour. The thing is not impossible. But it would require extraordinary courage in the leaders and discipline in their followers. To prophesy its success would be rash, but also it would be rash to prophesy its defeat. For here, as everywhere in

great practical questions, the answer depends on that unknown and unpredictable factor, the human will.

The question is urgent, for the danger is near. We have not time to wait for a gradual change in the un-co-ordinated mass called public opinion, for it is precisely the inertness of that that is the cause of the danger. When the war ended, it seemed to many that it must be the last war; for youth, it was thought, would never allow another, and youth would soon be in the saddle. Of all the disillusionments of recent years that has been the most dismal. Youth, broadly speaking, does not care. There are many reasons for this, some creditable, some not, and perfunctory discussion of them in this place would be worse than useless. But the fact remains that the majority of young men are indifferent to peace, and a large number are actually enthusiastic for war. The principal public manifestations of youth are to be found in Bolshevism and in Fascism; and both of these, whatever else they may be, are movements towards war. War has not disappeared by the arrival of a war-hating generation. But Youth is an unorganized crowd. To stop war we must look to organized forces; and Major Bratt may be right that organized capital and labour may combine for that purpose. Meantime, let us at least try to wake up from our trance!

G. LOWES DICKINSON.

A SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Two Witnesses. By GWENDOLEN GREENE. (Dent. 7s. 6d.)

HUBERT PARRY and Baron Friedrich von Hügel, the "Two Witnesses" of Mrs. Greene's book, were brothers-in-law, or, rather, they married two sisters, the daughters of Lord Herbert of Lea, and to this fortuitous relationship was due an intimacy of nearly fifty years. Without it, the two men would never have discovered each other, for they were completely unlike, and even superficially unsympathetic to one another. Against the Baron's large serene acceptance of the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, there stood Parry's "horror" of it—"the horror of his great hero, Cromwell—a fierce hatred that expressed itself in passionate words." As Mrs. Greene says, "their oppositeness stands out very clear." It was temperamental. Yet she shows them as one in spirit, lovers of truth, and accepting no second-best.

The volume is divided into two parts, each ostensibly occupied with one of the characters, but it really is a spiritual autobiography. We see the writer as an unhappy child, weeping alone in the boxroom; then as a rather *farouche* young woman, dissatisfied with life, and having little use for her acquaintances beyond the gratification of writing their names in her Hate Book. And throughout these early years, hers was a lonely spirit, afloat in a compassless boat on a choppy sea. Then, successively, there came into her vision two lighthouses, and by these she steered her course to the philosophical religion in which she has found her peace.

Of the two men, she seems to understand the Baron best. With her father, she is like a watcher outside the lighthouse, seeing shadows within, moving hither and thither across the window; but in her uncle's case, she is inside, watching the lamps being lit. Perhaps this is because, in the generation older than ourselves, our fathers and mothers, whom we love the best, are always the most difficult for us to understand. Very few parents are wholly three-dimensional for their children.

But also, there was a curious paradox in these two personalities. Hubert Parry's quick sympathy, his warm affection, the colour and the ardour of his conversation, welcomed friendship; yet he had a profound inner reserve. Where fundamentals were concerned, he seemed to say, "My secret to myself."

And with the Baron it was quite otherwise. Cut off, as he appeared at first, by his deafness, from easy intercourse with others, yet his youngest and humblest friend could not take a walk with him without being admitted to what seemed a unique intimacy. As Mrs. Greene says, "It never occurred to him to hide from us what he meant or felt; his soul spoke in all that he said."

Sections of the book are too discursive, and there are chapters in which the theme is lost sight of altogether. It is almost as if we had two separate books dovetailed into one another. This is regrettable, because Mrs. Greene's writing catches fire whenever she touches either of the two men. Her picture of Hubert Parry is alive. He moves through the pages, swiftly, on those winged feet of his—ardent, absorbed, joyous, and always intensely earnest whatever he was about, from picking apples to writing an Oratorio. And with the Baron, the effect is quite different. Mrs. Greene makes us feel alone with him, alone with him and the God who was throughout his life for him the one Reality.

The book is called a "personal recollection"; and, as such, it has an intimate character which no other writer could achieve; but, on the other hand, some aspects, especially in Hubert Parry's case, are thrown into the shade. We hear very little of his music. He said once, "the greatest composers are those . . . who sound the deepest chords in our nature and lift us above ourselves; who purify and brace us in times of gladness, and strike no jarring note in the time of our deepest sorrow." These were the qualities expressed in his own music, and it is here that future generations will find his witness to spiritual things.

EDITH OLIVIER.

A NEW INTERPRETATION OF BURNS

The Life of Robert Burns. By CATHERINE CARSWELL. (Chatto & Windus. 15s.)

THERE has been no full-length biography of Burns written since the beginning of this century, the publishers' announcement informs us; and it may be said that there was no satisfactory biography of him in existence even at that time. Up till then Burns's biographers had had two faults: they cared less for truth than for propriety, suppressing unwelcome facts in a glow of virtue; and they made moral prejudices do service for moral discrimination. The result was that they turned the poet out as a figure who could be accepted by an entirely respectable nation, mainly imaginary, which existed in their heads; and that they considered it their duty to annotate the blots on this figure with such comments as an entirely respectable nation would naturally expect. Burns's biography has accordingly been more a social than a literary or an historical occupation, and the three standard lives read now as if they had been written by all the respectable classes in Scotland collectively, instead of by the literary men who self-consciously found their names on the title page.

These faults have been radically amended in Mrs. Carswell's remarkable book. The author is conspicuously free from moral prejudices, she does not suppress anything that is relevant, she has obviously been content throughout with nothing less than the original sources, and her one desire, it is perfectly clear, is to present a true picture. She has also discovered, or released, a quantity of material which has appeared in no former life of Burns. The result is that she has created a new literary character, a figure which seems almost novel after the conventional one. Whether this figure is the definitive Burns it is too early yet to say; but at any rate it is human; we can understand it and be puzzled by it, see it in the round and at close quarters, and disagree about it as we can about any human figure in whom good and bad are mixed. The detail in the portrait is perhaps unusually full for a modern biography, and one feels that in the first half of the book Mrs. Carswell has somewhat overloaded it. But her method is finally justified; one gets the actual feel of the miry fields and the different weathers, mostly inclement, which were Burns's daily companions as a boy and a man; and the continual toil and poverty of his life cling to her portrait like some palpable substance, like the wet clay clogging his boots when he went about his work as an unsuccessful farmer and a skilful ploughman. The gross detail of country life—of Scottish eighteenth-century country life—was obviously essential to any true picture of Burns as a man; none of his former biographers have thought of supplying it; Mrs. Carswell has done so now, and shown the man in his own world.

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MACMILLAN & CO., LTD., LONDON, W.C.2

This new Burns is somewhat disconcerting, and will be found most disconcerting probably by those who sincerely, if indiscriminately, have fostered his comfortable public legend. Yet it is not his crying faults merely which make one feel, after reading Mrs. Carswell, that he is an impossible object for the somewhat complacent, indulgent affection usually accorded to him in his own country and elsewhere; it is the monstrous suffering, mainly caused by poverty, anxiety, and perpetual disappointment, which he had to endure for most of his life. This biography shows a man who all his life was in a false position. Such a situation would have corrupted a man of the strictest virtue. Mrs. Carswell refutes convincingly the imputation of drunkenness; but she can do little with the long, monotonous list of love affairs with country belles, or with some of his letters to his acquaintances, jauntily blatant, uneasily imitating the style of the practised buck. On the other hand, rarely, in a very insensitive age, did he act or write insensitively. His reference to Jean Armour as "a certain woman" in one of his letters to Clarinda is perhaps the meanest thing that can be attributed to him, and his substitution (for the sake of politeness) of Maria Riddell's name for Mary Campbell's in a love poem, long after the Highland girl was dead, the most insensitive. It is to his honour that his vices sat badly upon him, and that his virtues had always a natural grace. He was uniformly kind, generous, and forgiving in circumstances which made these qualities difficult and expensive. In painting the hardships of his life so realistically Mrs. Carswell has given a new lustre to those virtues. There are traits in his character about which her reader will not always agree with her; but they are, after all, traits in a character whom she herself has brought to life. Some of them are repellent. But if one is reasonably unbiased, one is bound to close the book with an increased sympathy and admiration for its subject, and with sincere gratitude to the author for what is both a public service and a moving achievement.

EDWIN MUIR.

"IN THE REALMS OF GOLD"

Studies in Keats. By JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY. (Oxford University Press. 7s. 6d.)

The Original "Venus and Adonis." By H. T. S. FORREST. (Lane. 7s. 6d.)

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"MUCH have I travelled in the realms of gold." It depends largely on the tastes and nature of the traveller as to what he finds there. Discoveries in the literary realms, unless they concern lost manuscripts, are rarely quite objective. No dazzling change from tramp to millionaire. The explorer goes in armed already with his personal cheque, and cashes it. An air of the particular is on all these volumes; that is to say, the author has special propensities or qualifications for the job he chooses. (True, Lady Gregory has found a manuscript; but it is her own.)

Take, for example, Mr. Murry and Mr. Forrest as a study in contrasts. They could never have cashed each other's cheques. Both examine poems and draw conclusions, but there the likeness ends. We know what to expect from Mr. Murry, and find it in these essays: an extremely subtle psychological probing, bordering frequently on the mystical; an interpretation of his subject in terms of his own spiritual experience. Mr. Murry has, himself, poetic perceptions which can hardly be expressed in prose. The effort to convey his own understanding of a poet's mood leads him into twisting and minute analyses. There is a danger in them, for they postulate a particular kind of sympathy in the reader. It is not simply that his values must be Mr. Murry's values, but that his idiom must be, at least temporarily, Mr. Murry's idiom. One notes, for instance, that the long argument with Mr. Richards about "pseudo-statements" turns entirely on the meaning given to the word "truth." In a sense, then, Mr. Murry, in seeking to clarify, surrounds him-

self in mists. Yet some of these essays—in particular, "The Feel of not to Feel It"—do bring out important aspects of Keats's nature, which, without Mr. Murry's sensitive treatment, might be overlooked.

Now for the contrast. A glance at the jacket shows us what to expect from Mr. Forrest: "Author of 'The Five Authors of Shakespeare's Sonnets.'" If the sonnets have five authors, surely "Venus and Adonis" may have two. Why two? On the God and Devil theory of creation. God made a lovely world, and then the devil pried and put some stupid bits in. For unluckily the devil was a dolt. Inconceivable that a genius and a dolt should work together, so the dolt, as Mr. Forrest has it, interpolated, echoed, and intruded to the extent of seventy-two stanzas. Shakespeare, robed in superhuman immortality, cannot be allowed his ups and downs. Mr. Forrest performs a brilliant operation. He cuts away—and sure enough the scars are all invisible. The trick is worth admiring for its neatness. Shakespeare is a rich field for conjurors. Who is the Interpolator? Mr. Forrest suggests, Southampton. Why not Shakespeare in impatient mood? But on the Divinity theory this is blasphemy.

Mr. Sheppard, who has used many goodly states and kingdoms for his own historical novels, appears as guide rather than discoverer, as instructor before critic. Since the habit of fiction writing is unlikely ever to be cured, let us at least be grateful for deterrents. All comprehensive sound instructors in a craft are deterrents—deterrents to the shut-your-eyes-and-leap-in-hope type of practitioner. Mr. Sheppard shows clearly enough that there are no lucky leaps into historical fiction, no short cuts into accuracy. His chapter on mistakes should be sufficient warning to the aspirant. But the would-be writer will find more than warnings here. He will find a survey of the field, advice and hints on every aspect of his task. Above all, he and the general reader will find in Mr. Sheppard an engaging guide who treats his subject with the pleasant ease of personal knowledge, and except for a minor prejudice or so, avoids controversy. So many treatises on the novel arouse too much argument to be of practical use. Mr. Sheppard gains by not attempting to teach art or discuss ultimates, but enlarging on those points of craft and industry which can usefully be learnt.

Returning to the realms of verse, we have Lady Gregory's one-act Irish legend, written when the Celtic movement was in infancy. Then to another childhood, where the headmaster of a Queensland grammar school (who better qualified?) assembles his ranks of native poets. Mr. Kellow is frank, at times, on their achievement; then he sportingly lets values drop, and gives them a good run. Four periods of poetry can be traced already. Rosy is the path. Who doubts? Australia has the ashes, and will have the laurels yet. A fifth period—even an age of gold—is bound to come.

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complete picture of the work which is now centred on Geneva. Except for a Foreword by Sir Eric Drummond, the authors of the book are anonymous, but from internal evidence it appears that most of the chapters are by different hands. There is no attempt at a continuous historical narrative, but the growth and methods of each department are described with admirable lucidity and, although the book is seldom heavy reading, it contains an immense number of facts. Two bibliographies, the text of the Covenant, and an index add to its general utility.

Inevitably, when thinking of the League, its larger political functions come first to the mind, and it is with the prevention of war that the first four chapters are chiefly concerned. The different methods of settling disputes between members, the various plans for general arbitration and security, the problem of disarmament and the work of The Hague Court with its corollary, the codification of international law, are successively described.

In this section of the book perhaps the most striking pages are those dealing with typical disputes in which the Council has intervened. There is a dramatic account of the Græco-Bulgarian frontier trouble in 1925 and of the way in which within twenty-four hours of the Secretary-General being notified, and only two and a half hours before a pitched battle was due to start, the Council succeeded in separating the rival armies. The controversy between the Universalists and the Regionalists, which broke out again at this year's Assembly in connection with the Briand plan for a European zolverein, is explained with rare impartiality, and the provisions of the Protocol and the reasons for its failure are fairly stated.

But it is when the authors come to the positive side of the League's work—the multifarious activities which they class under the general heading of International Co-operation—that the full romance of their story appears. It is curious to reflect that to the founders of the League this aspect of its work was comparatively unimportant, yet it is just here that it has achieved its most striking successes. Article 23 of the Covenant, from which the economic, health, transport, and humanitarian organizations have sprung, occupies a very small space in the original document, and it is to the undying honour of those who were responsible for the early development of the League that they realized the possibilities latent in it. As the author of the chapter on Financial and Economic Co-operation says, "Looking back, the decision to concentrate the activity of the League in its early years upon the development of international co-operation appears as perhaps the most important single act of policy during the first decade of its existence."

The principal achievements in this field have been the financial reconstruction of Austria, the settlement of war refugees, the stamping out of typhus and cholera in Europe, and the magnificent fight against white slave and drug traffickers throughout the world. The different organizations which have been developed to carry on these and similar tasks are described in detail and due credit is given to Dr. Nansen for the great part he played in post-war reconstruction. How efficiently this work was done may be judged from the fact that six thousand refugees who had been with Denikin's Army in Russia were being maintained by the British Government at a cost which reached £250,000 in 1921: in the following year Nansen became responsible for them and settled them all in employment at a total cost of £70,000—a cogent reply to those who regard the League as an extravagance.

To read this book through is to renew one's optimism, and few who have read it will challenge these two judgments which Sir Eric Drummond makes in his Foreword:—

"First, that the mere creation of the League and its continued existence during these ten years is one of those great facts which inevitably stand out as landmarks in the history of the world";

and second:—

"that during this space of ten years the League has definitely, and greatly, grown in strength—that is to say, in its hold on public opinion throughout the world and on the Governments and administrations through which public opinion acts."

BASIL MURRAY.

CALIBAN IN AFRICA

Caliban in Africa. By LEONARD BARNES. (Gollancz. 10s. 6d.)

IN the light of a very recent pronouncement by a responsible South African Cabinet Minister demanding that all Africa should accept the Union attitude towards the Blacks, the book "Caliban in Africa," by Leonard Barnes, has an immediate titillation and a peculiar significance. It is quite probable that the fearless pungency of Leonard Barnes's pages provoked Mr. Piet Grobler's outburst. In effect Mr. Grobler has assumed the mantle of President Monroe—he has practically said that the South African Government will regard as an act of unfriendliness any treatment of native races (in Africa generally) which differs from that adopted by the Unie van Suid-Afrika.

In England the South African—be he of Dutch or British extraction—is regarded as a good fellow; he is primarily a "Springbok." As such he is tolerant, generous, and very gallant; and it is difficult to detect that he is a monomaniac, that a "Black" psychosis hath him in thrall with its concomitants of fear, prejudice, and unreason. Balliol little knows with what deep meaning the South Africans of Trinity sang the time-honoured but unpublished song!

Leonard Barnes has exposed the fallacious magnanimity of the "Afrikaner" and has said publicly what the less race-obsessed South Africans have been saying for years in private. The pithiness, the elegance, and the austerity of his style alone make the book worth reading; the underlying sincerity of his convictions endorse the dignity of the task he has attempted, and the importance of the issues involved demands the consideration of all who have the future of the British Empire at heart.

The position of the English South African to-day is the same as that of a Northerner in Carolina in 1880. The Dutch element have been relentless in their top-dog policy since the Act of Union. Honour to whom honour is due, but at least they are to be credited with success in their endeavours, and those endeavours have been conducted with a remorselessness that has stopped at neither calumny nor deceit. They stand triumphant on a mound of broken olive branches, and they defend such destruction by magnifying the persistent provocation they have received at the hands of the insolent "little Englishers." The result is that just as it needed the Irish to resent the bright braggadocio of the Canadian Premier at the present Imperial Conference, so it would need a Prussian Guardsman to convince the Backveld Boer that a Briton had his good points. Nevertheless, the Dutchman in South Africa to-day is usually a more robust person than the corresponding Englishman; the former has "guts" and conviction which the latter too often lacks. Even Dutch bitterness and blindness are more manly than the lower middle-class snobbery and pompous ineptitude which some purely British communities in South Africa tend to affect.

Leonard Barnes perhaps misses the permanent underglow of real patriotism in the "Afrikaner" in his flashlight photograph of existing conditions; otherwise "Caliban in Africa" is a brave and brilliant intrusion into the dynamic workings of the most unique part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. He is right indeed when he says it is necessary for the Englishman to accept the sinister gloom of the Dutch outlook and become an "Afrikaner," or else be stigmatized a "foreign adventurer." There are, of course, numerous "foreign adventurers," and these give plausibility to the Dutch gibe. There are, however, many earnest Englishmen who love South Africa, who have adopted that land as their home, but whose public activity is obscured by the vindictive Press and parliamentary *guerre à outrance* which blackens political life. Many British do succumb to the oppression of Dutch tenacity and become "Afrikaners" (just as the Labour Party in South Africa has danced to the tune its masters called, the tune being its own death knell).

But deeper and more dangerous than all political controversy is the fearful fatalism with which the Bantu race is regarded. "Only by the subjugation of the black race will the white race survive" is the "Afrikaner" axiom, and this obsession results in a series of repressive measures which make political economy in South Africa ridiculous, and

which inevitably hasten a tragic social cataclysm. Lothrop Stoddard's "Rising Tide of Colour" and Carl van Vechten's "Nigger Heaven" should be read in conjunction with "Caliban" for a reader fully to realize the magnitude of the issues that are rapidly coming to a head in South Africa.

Barnes sums up decisively the black problem by concluding: "Thus, by a form of political and economic lead-swinging the 'Afrikaner' continually accepts a gigantic dole from the black man whom he affects to despise and whom he systematically abuses and defrauds." He has also said such penetrating things as: "This third-class performance by a first-class mind is a curious, and from a public standpoint, a distressing thing." This is a reference to the political activities of General Smuts, who has suffered a "complete divorce of politics and philosophy within his mind." He also implies that the South African Rhodes Scholar is rather more at home at Twickenham than he is on his return to his home town!

But to microscope his telling phrases is only to suggest facility in his vehemence. Actually by logic and parallel he has achieved a weighty summary of the situation to-day and the balance of a trained mind prevents, throughout his 250 pages, any glib journalistic effect. Those who are ignorant of the discoloured drama of the future which South Africa unfolds should read this book and realize for themselves the arresting quality of Leonard Barnes's timely candour and most opportune pessimism.

BEVIL RUDD.

THE GESTALT THEORY

Gestalt Psychology. By WOLFGANG KOHLER. (Bell. 15s.)

THE term Gestalt Theory seems to involve several different doctrines; that, indeed, is usually the function of such a slogan. *First*, it involves the doctrine that creatures apprehend forms and situations as a whole rather than a flat mosaic of stimuli; roughness, for instance, is not a property of individual sense data, and a rabbit remembered that it must take the darker of two shades of grey longer than it remembered the particular shade. We take it no one denies this. *Secondly*, that the important thing about an organism is not the boundaries that make it only able to react to a stimulus in one way (like a typewriter) but the continuous free forces, similar in each unit of the organism, whose equilibria and resultants are so ordered that it acts together as a whole (like a soap bubble). "Important" here seems to mean "important to the investigator," and investigators need not quarrel because they want to do different things. Even Professor Watson would not deny that you have to treat parts of a thing as a typewriter before you can apprehend the whole of it as a soap bubble. *Thirdly*, that the organism is what Mr. Russell has called emergent, in that it behaves as a whole in ways that could not have been predicted from its parts. But again, how much is the predictor supposed to know already? Part of one's knowledge of a part is how it behaves in different wholes. Dr. Kohler, for instance, compares an organism to a chemical compound, but he seems to mean more than that; you do know how a compound behaves if you know how its elements behave in combination; if he means that the whole organism cannot be known by any knowledge of its parts he is adopting vitalism, which he denies. *Fourthly*, that the activities of an organism can only be explained in terms of "insight"; something more primitive than reason, which was possessed by Dr. Kohler's famous apes. Certainly it is the refusal to admit insight, rather than the refusal to admit consciousness, which makes Behaviourism shocking; certainly behaviour ought to be investigated in as many ways as possible; but insight is in a very equivocal position in this determinist setting. In itself it is not far from the rational faculty of a conscious soul.

There is no doubt that the experiments inspired by these doctrines are extremely valuable, but the book is concerned to argue the matter rather than to describe experiments, and it sometimes seems a little accidental that the doctrines should all be mixed up in one word.

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"WHEN I was called before the Board of Selection a savage-looking old Army doctor who presided barked out, 'And you, sir—what are you prepared to do?' To which I answered, 'Anything.' It seems that the others had all been making bargains and reservations, so my wholehearted reply won the job." This same wholehearted reply, backed up by his amazing capacity for filling any post or doing any job, recurs throughout Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's intriguing catalogue of adventures, so that the only answer to anyone who asked, "What did he do in his longish life?" would seem to be, "Everything." Then why should not every man envy him? Most men do, probably, for the first sentence of his Preface is no exaggeration: "I have had a life which, for variety and romance, could, I think, hardly be exceeded," and if there are still some who do not envy, it is because the next sentence but one, "I have sampled every kind of human experience," sounds to them no more likely when they have read the book than it sounded before they began it. He was adept in most kinds of sport, including boxing, cricket, billiards, motoring, football, aeronautics, and skiing, and has thrilling adventures to tell of all of them. (It was a lifelong regret to him that he was no more than a good second-rate golfer.) He took an M.D. at Edinburgh, and travelled as ship's doctor to the West Coast of Africa, and for seven months on a whaler to the Arctic. He saw a good deal of three wars—the Soudanese, the South African, and the German. He addressed 300,000 people on the occult, travelling more than 50,000 miles to do so, and wrote seven books on the subject. Apart from all this he had a long and remarkable literary career, and is known to all the world as the creator of Sherlock Holmes. At whatever he chose to take up he quickly became an expert amateur. He was never a professional, but always bore the same relation to his pursuits, even his doctoring and his writing, as Sherlock Holmes bore to his pursuit of investigation.

What more could any man want? For his own part he was fairly satisfied. Doubts, which naturally appeared to balance a life so full of convictions and accomplishments, were only a little thicker and faster at the end than at the beginning, and to balance them in turn some of his convictions became stronger than ever. But if his doubts were few he had a good many disappointments. After spending a great deal of time and energy getting to the bottom of the Oscar Slater case, rousing inactive and retaliatory people to action and combat, he became largely responsible for getting the man out of gaol with Government compensation, only to find that Slater rounded on him and refused to pay the costs of the proceedings which Conan Doyle had instituted for him. So it was with other of his ventures. What was, perhaps, his chief disappointment is expressed in the sentence, "All things find their level, but I believe that if I had never touched Holmes, who has tended to obscure my higher work, my position in literature would at the present moment be a more commanding one." He says, "if I had never touched Holmes," as if Holmes were Rubber or South American Railroads, not because he had no essential belief in or affection for him, but because Holmes, like Oscar Slater, turned and bit him. The public wanted more and more, and when finally Sherlock was killed off, "You brute" was one lady's method of addressing the erring author, and many others wept. "I fear I was utterly callous myself," he writes, "and only glad to have a chance of opening out into new fields of imagination, for the temptation of high prices made it difficult to get one's thoughts away from Holmes."

His sense of material values and justice was extraordinarily acute. He could read between the lines of the report of a criminal trial in the newspaper, be convinced of the man's innocence, and in a few hours have all his amazing energy directed to upsetting the judgment. This is what happened with the Oscar Slater case, and the George Edalji case, and the "Appeal to the World's Opinion" about supposed British atrocities in the Boer War. He read of the accusations in the "Times" one day going up to town in

the train, immediately roused numbers of influential people, and worked sixteen hours a day for a week preparing a pamphlet controverting the statements. A few weeks later it had sold for sixpence in nearly all the countries of the world, the number of copies being 428,000. It paid for itself, the surplus was given to charities, and it was soon forgotten.

But his spiritual values were not so universally unerring as his material ones. His colossal activity was backed only by a small essential vitality. His utterly material, almost commercial, attitude towards "psychic phenomena" appears often to be little short of disgusting. "One splendid Arab," he writes, "had a face like an idealized W. G. Grace, swarthy, black-bearded, and dignified, rather larger than human. I was looking hard at this strange being, its nose a few inches from my own, and was wondering whether it could be some very clever bust of wax, when in an instant the mouth opened and a terrific yell was emitted. I nearly jumped out of my chair." That "nearly" is astonishing (even though Sir Arthur is writing of séances, about which he was very serious), for he had an acute and humanly sensitive wit. But his expressions are always ponderous when they touch "higher things." He could write, "Never will I accept anything which cannot be proved to me. The evils of religion have all come from accepting things which cannot be proved." He spent too much of his good life weighing and docketing, with his wit, which did not go deep enough to be undetachable, shut away for the time in the cupboard.

JOHN PIPER.

NEW YORK CITY

The Color of a Great City. By THEODORE DREISER. (Constable. 10s.)

NEW YORK a generation ago was "more varied and arresting and, after its fashion, poetic" than the standardized city of to-day. In order to build up a picture of the older city Mr. Dreiser has gathered together these sketches, the impressions and memories of his early discoveries. They range from the street-vendors in the Italian quarter, with their love feuds and dramatic crises, to the crowds at Manhattan Beach and back to the music-hall singer on Broadway or the dreary line awaiting admission to a lodging-house. There must have been few aspects of the city which the author did not know. He penetrated into goods-yard, factory, mission and slum, knew sandwich-men and rag-and-bone men, sailed with the harbour pilots and lodged in Hell's Kitchen. Under the mould of his conception of the city as a living whole his varied impressions took on a form which is emphasized by the recurring theme of the rivers and docks.

Because of this the book must be judged as a whole; it is impossible to read the sketches simply as good journalism. Mr. Dreiser saw New York as a "City of Dreams," into which poured young and ambitious men of all nations, where a few reached dizzy heights of success, and many sank past the lodging-house and the "Bread Line" to the river. The last sketch, "Rivers of the Nameless Dead," shows most clearly what the author's conception is and why it is unsatisfactory. Although it is obvious that Mr. Dreiser disapproves morally of sweated labour, bad housing, weakness and suicide, he seems to justify them æsthetically for no better reason than that they are part of the variety of life.

Yet the same power of seeing a situation as a whole is what makes the individual studies valuable. The dramatic excitement of a fire, the peculiar atmosphere of a Mission house, the dignity and monotony of a home for aged sailors are conveyed untouched through the medium of a prose style that is sensitive to changes of mood. There are sketches, too, like "Toilers of the Tenements" and "The Realization of an Ideal," where pity without sentimentality illuminates the lives of the poor.

A good deal in Mr. Dreiser's style is unpleasant to English ears. "Characterful" and "tideful" are worse than "colorful," whilst, with other American writers, he uses at their face value words like "darksome" and "mystic" ("how almost mystic," page 217) which misuse has depreciated.

N. M. HOLLEY.

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